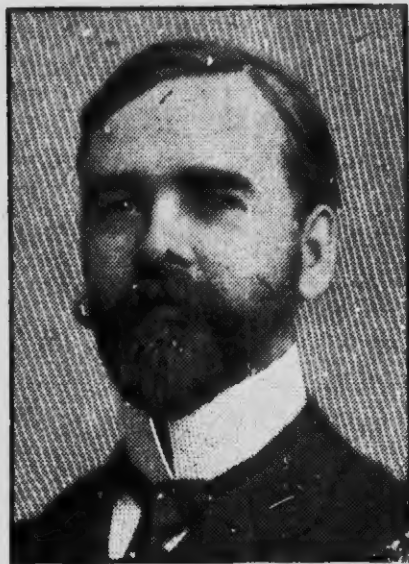


SPEECH
OF
HON. W. A. WEIR



DELIVERED AT
Ormstown, County of Chateauguy
ON
SEPTEMBER 14, 1907

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen—

It is over sixteen years since I had the opportunity and pleasure of addressing the people of Ormstown and vicinity, and I have always had a pleasant recollection of the intelligent and thriving population which at that time followed the discussion of political events with so much apparent perspicuity.

I am glad, once more, to have the occasion of being in this prosperous neighborhood and of speaking for a short time on public questions to an audience mainly composed of people from the district of Beauharnois. The reputation of this district for its attachment to the study of public questions, and for its clear judgment on the issues that from time to time present themselves is well known, and it is with the hope that your usual careful judgment will be rendered that I submit to you the following considerations on public matters.

I may say that I am always delighted to have an opportunity of addressing a country audience, because I find that in the rural parts of this province the people naturally take more time to consider political issues than is the case in some of our cities. It is natural, perhaps, that men whose fortunes are invested in land, as is the case with an agricultural population,

should have more genuine attachment to the soil and more interest in everything that affects the welfare of the country than men whose wealth is more generally invested in commerce merely, or in the stocks and bonds of the millionaires. Particularly is this so as regards the affairs of the province. The inhabitant of the counties understands thoroughly the importance of the legislative functions of our Legislature. Dealing, as we do, largely with questions affecting real estate, municipal affairs, our educational system, family and social obligations, the administration of law and the care of our lands and forests, the rural population very readily appreciates the importance of the work of the Provincial Legislature.

I am glad to be in a position to congratulate you upon the appearance of prosperity that is everywhere in evidence. The advancement of agricultural science, and in particular the development of the great dairy industry, have given an air of prosperity to this beautiful district that is seen in your smiling fields, your large and capacious barns, and in the comforts of your homes. To a population that is so thriving, industrious and intelligent, I have no hesitation whatever in submitting the cause of the provincial Liberal administration.

A BRIEF SUMMARY.

I do not intend to deal with financial questions in any detail, but I may say this, at all events, that we have entirely changed the aspect of affairs from the days between 1892 and 1897, when our opponents burdened the country with unjust taxation, accumulating deficits, and annual additions to the funded debt of the province.

You will remember that the last Conservative Government ended the first full year of their administration with a deficit of \$24,828, and that the final year of their care of the public affairs saw an increase of the payments for the year to \$4,907,281.71, leaving a deficit for that single year of \$984,043.01, necessitating, on the part of the Hon. Mr. Marchand, who was at that time called upon to assume the duties of office, the borrowing of \$700,000, by means of temporary loans, in order to pay the more pressing of the claims left behind by our adversaries. Under a Liberal administration, that temporary loan of \$700,000 has been paid off, and the funded debt of the province also reduced. We removed the burdensome and unjust taxation of our opponents, and instead of annual deficits, we have, by careful administration, been enabled to spend less each year than our revenue.

As you are all now well aware, the fiscal year which ended on the 30th of June last, closed with a surplus of \$500,000.

Is it not something to the credit of the Liberal Administration, that we have been able to live within our means; that we have removed certain burdensome taxes; that we have not borrowed one dollar on the public credit; and that, yet, we have been enabled to take due care of the public domain confided to our trust? We have looked well after the administration of Justice, the care of our schools, the encouragement of agriculture and colonization, but have done all these while living without our means.

GOVERNMENT COSTS LESS THAN IN THE LAST CON- SERVATIVE YEAR.

But, it may be said, "Your surplus and your freedom from borrowing may be due to other causes; for example, to the natural buoyancy of the affairs of the province during a time of pros-

perity." My answer to that is to point to the record and to show you that during the last year of Conservative administration, the total payments of the Provincial Government amounted to \$4,907,281.71, while, during the fiscal year just closed, we only spent \$4,823,824.50, or \$83,457.21 less than did our opponents in the last year of their administration. You all know that buoyant times naturally mean increase in the cost of many things,—yet, notwithstanding this fact, we can point to the record and show that in the year 1906-07 a Liberal Government, while fully attending to all the needs of the people and preserving their property, spent less than did their opponents in the year, ten years before.

PUBLIC WORKS.

We have not accomplished this work through allowing public property to fall into disrepair. On repairs to the various court houses throughout the Province we have spent \$254,538.49. We have built new court houses as follows:

At Rimouski	\$ 33,462
At Hull	41,593
At Sherbrooke	135,421
At Montreal	232,834

We have also contributed to the construction of the new court house at Valleyfield. We spent \$74,100 for the erection of the beautiful dairy school at St. Hyacinthe. We erected a new normal school at the city of Quebec at a cost of \$55,817. We have assisted in the construction of iron bridges in many sections of the Province at a very considerable cost.

EDUCATION.

Last year, for the great cause of education, we spent \$143,689.50 more than did our opponents in the last year of their Government, and, perhaps, more creditable still, we succeeded in arousing such an interest in the minds of the people favorable to the progress of education that the people themselves, through their municipal and school institutions, spent \$1,142,951 more for education during the last year than they did ten years ago.

COLONIZATION ROADS.

For the great matter of colonization roads in the newer districts of the province, we have annually spent \$20,000 more than did those who went before us.

AGRICULTURE.

In 1896, our opponents spent \$173,912 in the cause of agriculture, and, I may say that as far as our contributions went, this money was well spent and resulted in a vast amount of good to the agricultural population of Quebec, and I am just as confident that the \$218,500 spent by us in the fiscal year ending the 30th June last, resulted in even more good to the agricultural class, although it exceeded the Conservative expenditure by almost \$45,000.

BETTER ROADS.

In the current year, as you are already aware, we have taken authority from the Legislature to spend a large amount in order to encourage the making of good and permanent roads in the older municipalities. This policy, I am confident, will meet with the approval of every resident of the Province.

LABOR INTERESTS.

The Government has not forgotten, either, the social interests of the people—particularly of the workmen of our villages, towns and cities. The Liberal party has made the payments of mutual benefit associations unseizable. It has established night schools in all the cities and towns of the province, and also a bureau of factory inspectors to look after the interests of the working people and which has progressed and developed to such an extent that its usefulness is not exceeded by that of any similar institution anywhere in the world. We have established also a tribunal of arbitration and conciliation to lessen and end as much as possible the evils attending disagreements between employers and employees.

As regards the workmen in the factories, we have insisted on proper ventilation in every workshop in the land, and the adoption of labor-protecting machinery.

LABOR NO LONGER ALLOWED TO STAND IN THE WAY OF EDUCATION.

We have adopted regulations as to the hours of labor, particularly as regards women and children and have raised the age-limit for the admission of children to work in factories to

fourteen years, both for boys and girls—the object of this being to prevent the necessarily confined work of factories from hindering the physical, or deteriorating the moral development of young children.

In addition to this, we have placed an educational test upon the admission of children to factories, which, unfortunately, was much needed. Under the law as it now stands, no child can be allowed to work in a factory, unless he or she is able to read and write, or at least is in attendance upon a night school for the purpose of acquiring the necessary knowledge.

Mr. Bourassa's programme plan to help the working classes is to establish a Labor Council. In the same manner as with other brilliant things he says, he omitted to give any description of its functions or to show wherein it differed from the system in vogue.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

We have extended the work of the Council of Arts and Manufactures, and, under its auspices, have 16 night schools throughout the province, where young people have been diligently acquiring artistic and technical knowledge.

We have entered upon the policy of establishing trade schools, both by day and night, and are prepared to spend the necessary money in order to make them a success, as they are a necessity for the proper development of the great manufacturing industries of the province.

We have contributed liberally to the Polytechnic School in Montreal.

We have just contributed \$5,000 to assist the Technical Institute of Montreal, of which Mr. Alexander McFee, one of the distinguished sons of this county, has placed himself at the head and placed at its disposal his time and his talents.

COMMERCIAL EDUCATION.

We are establishing Commercial High Schools in the cities of Montreal and Quebec, where the necessary skill and knowledge of commercial affairs may be acquired by the children of the soil to place themselves on a par with any of those engaged in that great branch of human industry in any other land.

GOVERNMENT VERY LIBERAL TO CROWN LAND SETTLERS.

An apparently concerted attack has been made upon the Government on the ground that we have not been favorable enough to the colonization of the Crown Lands of the Province. In my judgment, this accusation is entirely unfounded.

As a matter of fact, there are many people who pretend that our Government has been far too liberal in ceding our Crown domain to intending settlers. What does the record show? From 1892 to 1897, our opponents issued 2,604 patents for Crown Lands under 500 acres in extent. From 1897-98 to 1905-06, we issued 8,395 patents for similar grants of land. Or, if you take the last year of the Conservative administration, you will find that they issued 595 land patents for 65,881 acres, while in 1905-06, we issued 1376 land patents for 138,896 acres, or considerably more than double both in number and extent than our opponents did.

If you object to the comparison with 10 years ago, I can point to the neighboring province of Ontario — where last year land patents were issued to the extent of 10,833 acres, in comparison with our 138,896 acres.

During the investigations of the Colonization Commission, a few years ago it was found that one "poor settler" had obtained 18 grants of land. In many cases, it was shown that the small saw-mill owners had applied through their employees and friends for government land lots. It is needless to say that these men were not bona fide settlers; that what they were after was the valuable woods upon the lots and that once the land had been denuded of the trees they ceased to be settlers. It is a well-known saying in many parts of the forest regions of this province, that "The settler moves out upon the last load of wood." In a new region and under new skies, he again becomes a settler and again the main object of his anxiety is the wood upon the land.

I do not wish to say one word against the general propagation of a true and sound colonization policy. The Government can have no better programme than the placing of its children upon its wild lands, but the point I do wish to make and to emphasize is that it is absolutely

necessary to exercise the utmost care and scrutiny in connection with this question. Not everyone who calls himself a settler is worthy of the bounty of the government.

FORESTS THE PROPERTY OF THE QUEBEC PEOPLE.

The forests of the province are not the exclusive property of those who may apply for lots of land as settlers. They belong as much to the inhabitants of the villages, towns, cities and rural municipalities of the province as they do to intending settlers. You must remember that for each year the people of this province as a whole, derive a revenue of from \$1,200,000 to \$1,500,000 from the forests of the province. This large sum of money is expended on your behalf in the administration of justice, in maintaining civil government in the province, for help to our schools and academies, for the erection of public buildings and for the public necessities generally. Would it be right, would it be just to put no restriction whatever upon the demands of those who call themselves settlers? If so, I ask you: How are you to replace the million and a quarter or million and a half dollars per year that we now collect from the lumbermen who now undertake our forest operations? The appeals made by Mr. Bourassa, and some of his friends, in this connection, seem to me to be appeals made to the primal instincts of a section of our population who are extremely anxious to get something for nothing.

An attempt is being made to create the impression that it is the Liberal Government alone that is responsible for the leasing out of our forest lands to lumber merchants.

This is not correct, and, in anything I may say on this matter, I do not wish to be considered as acting on the defensive. I am thoroughly convinced that the policy of leasing out our forests to lumber merchants is an eminently wise one, if properly administered. Our trees are a crop like anything else. Unless reaped in time, they will become old and decay and be of no use to anybody. Moreover, if we had not a class of men interested in the preservation of the forests, the tremendous damage by fire, which we have already suffered from, would have been ten-fold worse.

But, as to the comparison in this field of administration, let me point out that, since Confederation, Conservative administrations have leased timber limits to the extent of 37,778 square miles, while Liberal governments have only leased out 28,395 square miles, or 11,483 square miles less than our opponents. The main difference between Conservative and Liberal administrations in this matter has been that, while our opponents received an average bonus of only \$21.29 per square mile for the forests, they sold or leased, the average of the Liberal administration amounts to \$101.09.

The Hon. Mr. Gouin, O. P. Premier of the Province demonstrated to his audience at Chateauguay, that if the Conservatives had been as careful in their transactions in this regard as had the Liberals, the savings with accumulated interest, would have lessened our provincial debt by at least \$15,000,000.

CONSERVATIVES GOT \$7 MILE, GOUIN GOVT. GETS \$195.03.

But Mr. Bourassa says: "All this is ancient history." The Liberals have come into power at a time when the price of lumber is high and the Conservatives were in power when the price of lumber was low.

I can at least answer this, that when the Conservatives were in power, the pine forests of Quebec were unrivalled in worth and quickly disappeared to political favorites and others at almost nominal prices.

If that answer refers too far back, I can point him to the year 1892, when limits in this province were sold at \$14.28 per square mile, or to the year 1894, two years later, when limits were sold at \$7.14 per square mile—just one-half the figure—or, to the year 1897, when the government, just previous to the general elections, sold the well-known Lamontagne limits for \$7,500, which immediately, between nomination and polling days, were resold for the sum of \$34,000. I defy Mr. Bourassa or anyone else, to point out any similar transactions in the record of Liberal administrations.

The last sale of timber rights took place in June, 1906, and the price received therefor was not \$7, nor \$14, per square mile, but \$195.03 per square mile.

1896-97, the last year of Conservative administration, is, after all, not so very ancient, and from the Crown

lands, during that year the revenue derived was only \$879,266.26, whereas, in 1905-06, or only nine years later, we received a revenue of \$1,507,925.39; a difference in favor of Liberal methods of collection of what is due to the province of \$628,719.73.

I can speak on this matter with some degree of independence, inasmuch as the department over which I have the honor to preside is a spending department. In the Public Works we collect no revenues, so that the credit of the financial showing rests with my colleagues more than with myself or my predecessors in the office I hold. I know the patriotic care and anxiety that particularly inspires the honored leader of our government, the Hon. Mr. Gouin, in his intense desire to give a sound, business-like, practical and progressive administration of the affairs of the province, and I am delighted with the magnificent success that has crowned his efforts as well as those of his predecessors. He has been in office only two and a half short years, and yet in that time the spirit of confidence and of hope in the future destinies of our province has become widespread—our people see vistas of new development and progression under the able leadership of so distinguished a man.

STORMY PETREL OF POLITICS SEEKS THE SUPPORT OF REACTIONARIES.

And yet, strange to say, it is at this period that there bursts upon our political horizon one of those stormy petrels of politics whose motives it is difficult to understand. Mr. Bourassa calls himself a Liberal—an admirer of Liberal history and Liberal doctrine—a friend of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the renowned and eminent leader of the great Liberal party of the Dominion of Canada, whose advent upon the shores of Europe is greeted by the applause of the greatest men of the age and by all the great metropolitan exponents of public opinion, and whose name will forever be revered in the annals of our country. And yet it is Mr. Bourassa's pleasure to oppose and denounce Sir Wilfrid Laurier on every possible opportunity, to deride his administration and defame his friends, his colleagues and supporters. At the present time Mr. Bourassa—"a hereditary Liberal," as he loves to call

himself, seeks support and applause from everything that is conservative and reactionary in the Province of Quebec.

I do not wish for one moment to deny the eminent ability of Mr. Bourassa. As a student and a platform orator, he certainly has talents almost as remarkable as his vanity. As to his programme, or his policy, it is difficult to speak, because very few people can understand what he means to do, or what practical reforms he is advocating. He is forever boasting of his independence. Independence, I will admit, is a noble quality, but the independence of Mr. Bourassa seems to me to resemble very much the qualities of a bull turned loose into a crockery shop, where he works his independent pleasure. The bull is a very useful animal under certain circumstances, and so, I presume, may be Mr. Bourassa, but the country has not found out in what way to make use of him.

He has been for eleven years in the House of Commons at Ottawa, and I would like to know the single reform in the interests of the people accomplished by him there. I am told that Mr. Bourassa never proposed a bill or measure in the interests of the public—that he even does not deign to attend the meetings of the committees of the House, where the most material work is accomplished; that for days and weeks each session his seat in the House knows him not, but that, whenever there is an opportunity to make a disturbance, Mr. Bourassa is sure to be on hand.

If you will, for one minute, compare Mr. Bourassa with the great men of our past history—like Sir Louis LaFontaine, who, in the stormy times after the rebellion of 1837-38, set nobly to work to produce harmony and concord between the warring elements in his country, and who left a record which claims the applause of Liberal and Conservative alike—if you will look at the career of Sir George Etienne Cartier, whose wisdom and tact, both before and after Confederation, did so much to set the Dominion of Canada upon a firm foundation; if you will look at the marvelous career of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, to-day the recognized bond of union between all the provinces and people of all races and religions within the boundaries of our country, and then compare the pla-

tures of these men with the ignominious ideals set before himself by Mr. Bourassa, I am confident that you will be able to gauge the smallness of the man.

NO STATESMANLIKE MEDIATION BUT ALWAYS THE POUND OF FLESH.

After all, what did he accomplish at Ottawa? When the Boer war was being waged against the Motherland, and the patriotic children of Canada wished to lend a helping hand to the Mother Country, Mr. Bourassa's eloquent voice was raised in saying that the government had no constitutional right to help forward the desire of the people, and that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was false to his trust in yielding to the demands made upon him.

Mr. Bourassa, at that time, would rather have seen a civil war aroused in Canada than to grant any of his fellow-countrymen the liberty of going to the Motherland in her far-away quarrel.

When the extremely delicate question of the educational settlement of the new Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan came up for discussion, when the utmost statesmanlike qualities were necessary to avoid the rending of the different elements of this population into two hostile factions, and the calm judgment of Sir Wilfrid Laurier found a solution of the difficulty, what did Mr. Bourassa do? He loudly claimed the pound of flesh—no conciliation for him—no statesmanlike mediation, and again, if public opinion had followed, dangers to the commonwealth would have resulted.

There was one opportunity for useful work which presented itself to Mr. Bourassa, right in his own county, in the chief town of that county, when, a year ago, a desperate strike broke out between the employers and employees. If Mr. Bourassa was not satisfied with the policy of conciliation in the House of Commons, surely he ought to have been favorable to a policy of conciliation right at home. But all during that bloody strike, when lives were lost and property wrecked, no one heard of any efforts on the part of Mr. Bourassa to calm the storm.

On the contrary, we find him turning up a few months afterwards at Ottawa, speaking eloquently and well upon the imperious necessity of having our

postage stamps and government notes printed in both languages; we find him denouncing the development and progress of Canada as a hated evil; the idea that thousands and hundreds of thousands of people from foreign lands are rushing into our Northwest to take up land is a hideous nightmare to him, and he violently denounces them as the off-scouring of jails and insane asylums.

NO PRESTIGE AT OTTAWA, MR. BOURASSA TURNS TO PROVINCE

He realizes that, at Ottawa, his prestige is gone, and that neither he nor his two youthful followers will ever likely again be elected to that honorable body. He thinks it time to propound a new policy; to devote his heroic efforts to save the Province of Quebec from the thralldom of an iniquitous Government. And, what do you find him doing? He thinks it time to be a little politic, and so he comes with honied words and favorable phrases about Sir Wilfrid Laurier — the great chief of the Liberal party, and he loudly proclaims himself a Liberal. But he cannot entirely prevent the truth of his heart from speaking out and we find him saying at Montmagny, last July, that his administration was more corrupt than was any Conservative administration.

At the same meeting he exclaimed: "It is stated that we must sacrifice our principles, our rights, the interests of our children, for Mr. Laurier. Now, such a programme I have always denounced and will denounce." He cries out that Sir Wilfrid is surrounded by thieves. I ask any man of calm judgment, who knows Sir Wilfrid, if such a description has any truth in it, and yet it is made by Mr. Bourassa, who claims he is a Liberal and an admirer of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as a great leader of men.

At the Montmagny meeting, the fire had not yet completely got into his brain, and we find him uttering the following. Referring to the charges of our opponents against the Honorable Messrs. Turgeon and Prevost, he said: "I joined with Hon. Mr. Gouin and Hon. Mr. Turgeon in 1892, in denouncing the Hon. A. R. Angers for having taken the investigation of the charges against the Ministry out of the hands of the Legislature, which is the only proper place to make such in-

vestigations. These charges are lost in the turmoil of an election. The Hon. Mr. Prevost, the Hon. Mr. Turgeon, too, may be innocent. I hold them to be innocent until they are proved guilty."

This was in the middle of July last, and yet, a few days afterwards, at Ste. Martine, in this county, we find him taking for granted that the Hon. Messrs. Turgeon and Prevost are guilty of the allegations made against them and denouncing them with all the vehemence of his fiery eloquence.

CAMPAIGN OF WHOLESALE DENUNCIATION OF LEADERS

The man who called upon the Hon. Mr. Gouin in justice to the people and to his accused colleagues to hold a Parliamentary investigation, within two weeks condemns these men without any additional proof of any kind and condemns the Hon. Mr. Gouin for keeping them within his Cabinet. He complains that Mr. Turgeon does not have the Baron de L'Epine arrested for perjury, well knowing that the latter had so well chosen his ground that there could be no evidence, save his oath against Mr. Turgeon's. No magistrate would issue a warrant under such circumstances. He would require the deposition of two witnesses or some other evidence, corroborative of the complainant.

THE BARON DE L'EPINE.

The low moral standard of the Baron de L'Epine was sufficiently demonstrated at the investigation held at the last session of the Legislature. The Hon. Mr. Prevost had referred to a blackmailing letter received by him from Baron de L'Epine threatening that unless he obtained a government situation, he would make damaging disclosures against the Minister. Baron de L'Epine wrote to the Speaker of the House denying that he had ever sent the letter in question.

In order to ascertain the facts of the case, a committee of the House held an investigation, during which the Baron de L'Epine, under oath, admitted having written and signed the letter, but emphatically denied having sent it. On the other hand, Mr. Girard, editor of the Journal of Agriculture, swore that the letter was given to him by the Baron de L'Epine, with a request that

he should deliver it personally to the Hon. Mr. Prevost, which he did. This witness was cross-examined by Mr. Teller, M.P.P. for Joliette, one of the ablest lawyers in the House, but his evidence remained unshaken. The fact of the sending of the letter was supported by the production of another letter from the Baron de l'Epine to the Honorable the Prime Minister, in which the Baron referred to threats that he had made to Mr. Prevost.

The perusal of these letters, and the finding of the committee show very clearly the character of the man upon whom Mr. Bourassa and his friends depend for their slanderous statements. Here are the letters:

(Translated.)

LETTER FROM BARON DE L'EPINE TO HON. MR. PREVOST

Quebec, 30th October, 1906.

Sir,—Hearing that you are at home, I take advantage of it to place myself in communication with you and to give both you and myself an opportunity of putting an end to our dissensions. In a word, this is the final step towards conciliation. In your capacity of Minister and in the free use of your prerogatives, you promised me a position. My claiming the fulfillment of that promise brought about the difficulty between us. You are aware, and I repeat it, that I am determined to obtain the fulfillment of that promise by all legitimate means and I shall not falter in my resolution. So far, if I have spoken, and I had no reason for remaining silent, I have not written. That will come if I do not get satisfaction and, next session you will succumb under the weight of various charges, especially that of having forever ruined Belgian emigration to the Province of Quebec. Chance circumstances have placed me in possession of documents supplying crushing proof of that theory. Under such conditions I do not fear open war, but I should be greatly grieved and reluctant to have recourse to it. I do not in the least wish to annoy you; I wish merely to save myself from the ridicule with which you have covered me and to earn my living honourably.

You are a Minister, while I am a private individual, therefore it is for me to take the first step. I do so frankly, but it will be the last. It

is easy for you to answer indirectly by obtaining for me work in other departments which you could not give me under your orders. Under such conditions I will work to remove the bad impression prevailing in Belgium and I will hand you over a record which might otherwise remain a document injurious to your political career.

Believe me, it is better that we should seek grounds of agreement rather than of conflict and I write these lines under the inspiration of calmness and reflection.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) Baron de l'Epine.

The above letter was inserted in the Votes and Proceedings of the House.

A few days afterwards, i.e., the 25th of February, one thousand nine hundred and seven, the Baron de l'Epine wrote the following letter to the Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Quebec:

(Translated.)

LETTER FROM THE BARON TO MR. SPEAKER.

Quebec, 25th Feb., 1907.

The Honourable The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Quebec:—

Mr. Speaker—By a vote of a majority of its members, the Legislative Assembly, at its sitting of Friday last, ordered the insertion in its Votes and Proceedings of a letter which the Honourable Mr. Prevost had laid on the table on Tuesday, the 18th instant, and which he had stated was a letter coming from me.

I claim that said assertion is false and I deny peremptorily without reserve, having sent or caused to be sent the said letter to the Honourable Minister.

I am simply a victim to an indelicate proceeding and I pray that the House do not allow itself to become a party to it by refusing the act of justice which I ask for.

I therefore ask that my denial be equally inserted in the Votes and Proceedings.

Kindly accept, Mr. Speaker, the expression of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Baron de l'Epine.

(Translated.)

**LETTER FROM THE BARON
TO THE PREMIER.**

Quebec, 1st Nov., 1906.
134 d'Alguillon street.

Mr. Premier,—In the course of the visit I had the honor of paying you yesterday, you observed that I had failed to notify you of the promises which the Honourable Minister of Colonization had made to me. At the time my memory was not faithful, but I find now that I had mentioned the fact on the 19th of August. . . . was there any need to bring this matter forward before that date, would it not have been preferable that it would never have been brought up?

Allow me to leave aside all these vexing incidents to forget them and to give you a synopsis of the situation I am in as it is; this is the fifth year I have been entrusted with various missions by your government, I am confident that I have given my best efforts and devotion to these several matters, the fact is, I believe, I have given general satisfaction; I have made no money; on the contrary, I have contracted debts. I blame no one and I do not complain, but, finding myself in a very critical condition, I ask the government to which I have given my time and which I have worthily represented at Liege, to grant me temporarily a position which will enable me to honourably earn my living during this winter. Is not my demand natural and just, all the more so if it is acknowledged that the importation of horses has been beneficial to the extent that members have referred to it in their elections. I must evidently have a small share of merit as to the execution. As to the controversy in certain newspapers against Mr. Prevost I disown any connection with it whatever. It has only revealed to the public facts which have been published in Belgian newspapers and which have long since crossed the ocean. I acknowledge, however, that it coincides with certain threats which I addressed to him after he had driven me to it and offended me most unjustly. However, I ask nothing better than to forget.

Hoping, Mr. Premier, that you will take these lines into consideration, accept the assurance of my deep respect and entire devotion.

(Signed) Baron de l'Epine.

To the Honorable Mr. Gouin, Prime Minister of the Province of Quebec.

THE REPORT.

The conclusion of the committee's report is as follows:

Your committee has come to the following conclusions:

1. Mr. de l'Epine did write and sign the letter of 30th October, 1906, which forms the object of the present investigation, with the decided intention that it should reach Hon. Mr. Prevost.
2. As a matter of fact, he handed this letter to Mr. Alexandre Girard, his friend, with instructions to forward it to the person to whom it was addressed.
3. This letter was handed, on the 30th October, 1906, to Hon. Mr. Prevost by Mr. Girard, himself in conformity with the formal instructions which he had received from Mr. de l'Epine.
4. The next day, 31st October, 1906, Mr. de l'Epine called upon Mr. Girard to enquire as to the result obtained by his letter.
5. Mr. de l'Epine, in his letter of date, the 25th February, 1907, to the Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Quebec, in which he affirms to have never forwarded or caused to be forwarded this letter of 30th October to the Hon. Mr. Prevost, has knowingly made a false affirmation, and, in so acting towards the Speaker of this House, he committed a grievous violation of the privileges of the Legislative Assembly. And your committee adds that in declaring under oath, as he did before your committee on the 7th March instant, that he had never directed Mr. Girard to transmit this letter to the Honourable Mr. Prevost, and further that he had never addressed any threats to the latter, Mr. de l'Epine did knowingly make a false statement and the same is clearly proven, firstly by Mr. Girard, whose evidence is corroborated by Honourable Mr. Prevost, by Mr. Alfred Pelland, by all the circumstances which preceded and followed the signa-

ture of this letter, and finally by the acknowledgment of Mr. de l'Epine himself, made in a most formal manner, and over his own signature, in the letter which he wrote and addressed two days later, to wit: 1st November, 1916, to the Honourable the Prime Minister, which letter forms part of the present report.

The whole respectfully submitted,
F. X. DUPUIS,
Chairman.

SOME BOURASSA EXTRA- VAGANCES.

At Montmagny, last July, we find Mr. Bourassa saying he is willing to give Mr. Gouin an independent support on certain conditions; and within a few weeks, at Rigaud, he proclaims that Mr. Gouin is a coward, a cut-throat and a midnight assassin, and, at L'Assomption, puts a climax to his vehemence by saying that the Hon. Premier of this province is a man without character.

Everywhere, he professes respect for the people, and then tells them that they have elected as their representatives a lot of "mangy politicians," "political puppies," and "spiritless slaves." Mr. Bourassa, on the platform has never a kindly word to say of anyone. He is making a campaign of wholesale denunciation. Can any possible good come out of it? It may please some venomous and ignorant people, but on the whole it is a very sad event in our political story.

At Ste. Martine, a few weeks ago, Mr. Bourassa vigorously denounced the Hon. Mr. Prevost for selling certain mining rights in the Chibougamoo district and eloquently demonstrated that the other Ministers were interested in the alleged iniquity. Loud cheers from the unthinking greeted his remarks. Now, what was the proof that he brought against Mr. Prevost's colleagues? Mr. Bergevin, of Beauharnois, had spoken at the Chateauguay meeting respecting a projected line of railway from Montreal to Labrador, and was so reported in all the newspapers. Mr. Bourassa in order to get a little applause, twists this statement of Mr. Bergevin into a declaration of the intention of the Government to construct a railway to the McKenzie Mines at Chibougamoo, in order corruptly to benefit him. Now, every one but Mr. Bourassa knows that a railway

from Montreal to Labrador would be hundreds of miles away from Chibougamoo. Mr. Bourassa's political standards unfortunately depend too much upon statements like this.

Mr. Bourassa on several occasions has publicly declared that he was offered a portfolio by the Hon. Mr. Gouin and he nobly spurned the same. The Hon. Mr. Gouin, and you and I and everybody believes him, declares that such a statement is absolutely without foundation.

PERVERSION OF FACTS

ABOUT TIMBER BERTHS

At Ste. Martine again Mr. Bourassa said, according to the Star's report, that he had the sworn evidence of Messrs. J. R. Booth and E. B. Eddy—two of the greatest lumbermen and operators in the two provinces, who declared that mile for mile Quebec limits were more valuable than the Ontario limits. In support of this statement, his newspaper organ *Le Nationaliste*, referred to the report of the Colonization Commission. Mr. Bourassa's contention was that the Government was not getting enough from our forest lands. The proof seemed astounding, but, after a diligent search of the report of the Colonization Commission, I can tell you, on my responsibility as a Minister of the Crown, that Messrs. J. R. Booth and E. B. Eddy never swore anything of the kind. What Mr. Booth did say in his evidence, was "We do not look for the timber to pay us in Quebec as in Ontario," and he gives as his general reason that in Ontario the settlers are not allowed to pick out good wooded lots, and that the trees still belong to the limit owner, even when the lots are conceded to the settlers—that the stumpage dues are less in Ontario and the mode of calculating the same more stringent in Quebec—that the Quebec limits are far removed, being more difficult to reach with supplies; more wages were demanded by men to work therein, and it was more costly and difficult to get the product out.

Mr. Eddy's evidence does not help Mr. Bourassa any more than this.

Does Mr. Bourassa think now, in calmer moments, that he obtained the applause of his Ste. Martine listeners by fair or honorable means?

SOME REMARKABLE INACCURACIES.

At Ste. Martine, Mr. Bourassa said that "the pulp industry uses up trees as small as three inches and calls for the clearing of everything on the timber berths," according to the Star's report.

The truth is that our forest laws, according to article 12 of the Regulations, provide that the lumber merchants are forbidden to cut pine trees of less than twelve inches diameter, spruce trees of less than eleven inches diameter, and other trees less than nine inches diameter at three feet above the stump—the only exception to this rule being the case of black spruce of seven inches diameter.

Mr. Bourassa must be presumed to know these things, and yet he tells his audience that the pulp industry calls for the clearing of everything on the "timber berths,"—a term which is only applied to Government limits.

In order to make a strong comparison against us, he said that, in Ontario, timber limit holders could only take pine and pulp wood. If he will look at the report of the Ontario Department of Lands, Fisheries and Mines, for last year, at pages 34 and 35, he will see that the Licensees paid stampage on all kinds of trees including sawlogs and boom and dimension timber of all kinds, of ash, birch, elm, hemlock, etc.

Mr. Bourassa also said that in the province of Ontario, the timber limits are advertised over twelve months before sale.

I hold in my hand a printed notice of sale of the Provincial Government of Ontario stating that an Order in Council dated 8th of July, 1907, called for the sale of certain limits on the 3rd day of September, 1907, or less than two months after the Order in Council came into force. One cannot but wonder at the strange source of Mr. Bourassa's information.

At the meeting at L'Assomption, Mr. Bourassa said that our limits were sold privately. I want to tell him that such a statement as that is absolutely without foundation, and that it is impossible for him or anyone else to produce an iota of proof to substantiate the same. But there is no doubt he knows better and only said so to gain a moment's applause.

BREAKEY CHARGES ARE UNSUPPORTED BY EVIDENCE

Mr. Bourassa has further stated that, in June 1905, certain limits were sold to Mr. John Breakey, a well-known lumber merchant, after a corrupt conversation had been had between him and the Hon. Mr. Turgeon, at a luncheon at the Garrison Club in Quebec, during an adjournment of the sale. Mr. Breakey has answered over his own signature, that neither then, before, nor after had he ever lunched, breakfasted or supped with the Hon. Mr. Turgeon. In spite of that fact, Mr. Bourassa does not seem to think that he is called upon, as a gentleman, to retract his injurious statement.

Mr. Bourassa says that Mr. Breakey made \$695,000 profit out of the transaction. How he came to acquire so intimate a knowledge of Mr. Breakey's private affairs, I cannot tell, nor can he, at least he does not venture to give any proof of his statement. It is impossible, without the employment of a very keen detective, to know what profit Mr. Breakey made on this transaction. It is publicly stated, however, that some fifteen months afterwards, he formed a syndicate into which the property in question was put at a price profitable to Mr. Breakey and is to be worked by the syndicate. During the fifteen months in question, it must be remembered that there were circumstances which tended to increase the value of those particular limits. A branch of the Quebec & Lake St. John Railway was constructed to the St. Maurice River, in the vicinity of the limits in question—the construction of the Quebec bridge was being pushed on with celerity, allowing ultimately a direct export line from the limits to the mills where the wood pulp would be utilized, and, more than all during the same time, there was a very considerable and unexpected rise in the price of pulp wood and timber of all kinds. But, notwithstanding all these circumstances, I dare to assert that Mr. Bourassa's estimate or allegation as to Mr. Breakey's profits are entirely fictitious. There is no official information on the subject and any knowledge I have gained from private sources indicates that Mr. Breakey's profit was about a fifth of that indicated by Mr. Bourassa.

It must be remembered that, both in the case of Mr. Breakey and of Mr. Dupuis, which are the two cases that Mr. Bourassa talks so much about, the bids were accepted in the presence of lumbermen from Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, and many of the United States, after the timber berths had been advertised, not only during the year 1905, but in several previous years. Lumbermen are as keen to obtain an advantage as anyone else, and, if these limits were sold at the absurdly low figure that Mr. Bourassa asserts they were sold at, the other lumbermen would have been just as keen as Mr. Breakey to purchase them.

DUPUIS' CHARGES.

As regards the transaction in which Mr. Dupuis was interested, I have always understood that Mr. Dupuis purchased, at public auction, for a client, who subsequently did not relieve him of his bargain, and that after waiting for several months, Mr. Dupuis was very glad to get rid of the limits without any profit whatever. By a letter to the press, he has so stated, and he is likely to be better informed on this matter than Mr. Bourassa, whose reckless audacity in matters of such serious import is so unfortunately notable.

Mr. Dupuis has retired from politics and cannot come upon the platform and defend himself. It is certainly strange that between the date of the sale in 1904 and for three years after, while he had a seat in the House, no one complained of this transaction.

MORE PROFITABLE TO LUMBER IN ONTARIO THAN IN QUEBEC

I would like, with your permission, to say a word as to the relative value of the timber limits in Quebec and Ontario. Every lumberman I have conversed with on this subject, has stated, as did Mr. Booth to whose evidence I have already referred, that it is more profitable to lumber in Ontario than in the Province of Quebec. The main reason is that in Ontario, they have far more pine trees than we have, and that it is much easier to get supplies into the camp and to get the wood out than it is in the far distant limits that remain to the Province of Quebec at the present time. As Senator Edwards said, in a recent inter-

view in *La Presse*, the Province of Ontario is, in reality a peninsula, almost surrounded by the waters of Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Georgian Bay, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and the Ottawa River. The streams going into these waters make lumbering operations extremely easy and much more profitable than lumbering in any limits that we have to sell in the Province of Quebec.

As to the value of the forest trees in the respective provinces, I find that the province of Ontario, in 1905, cut saw-wood (pine and other), boom and dimension timber (pine and other) to the extent of 779,771,419 feet b.m. on their limits, whose area amounts to only 29 per cent. of the conceded limits of the Province of Quebec.

On the other hand, Quebec cut of similar timber only 229,320,013 feet b.m. — a difference in favor of Ontario, for that year's operations, of 550,451,406 feet b.m.; or taking into consideration the difference in area, the Ontario limits produced last year eleven times the product of the Quebec limits in this particular.

Under these circumstances, and taking into consideration any advantages that Quebec may possess as regards pulp wood, as well as the statement of the lumbermen that it is more costly to operate in the limits of Quebec than in Ontario, which has the markets of the United States just across the great lakes, is it surprising that the bonus received by the Ontario Government for its limits is larger than the bonus obtainable by the Quebec administration? The same lumbermen who, in Quebec, will not pay more than a bonus of \$200 a square mile, are ready and willing to pay much larger bonus in the Province of Ontario. Is the present administration of this province any more responsible for our geographical conditions than were the administrations who preceded us?

On the other hand the stumpage duties collected in Quebec are greater in many respects than are those in Ontario, and when we have collected them, together with the bonus, the annual ground rent, the transfer fees, and the fire tax, and subjected the purchaser to the right retained by the Government of allowing settlers to take lots of land out of the limits without com-

pensation, it appears to me that we are getting all for our forests that can reasonably be expected at the present time.

More than a year ago, however, we came to the conclusion that under the existent circumstances, it was not desirable, for some time at least, to part with any more of our timber limits and that policy was adhered to last June when, for the first time in many years, no sale in Quebec timber lands was announced in the Official Gazette.

FOREST RESERVES ALREADY POLICY OF GOVIN GOVT.

Mr. Bourassa announces, with a great flourish of trumpets, that, according to his progressive ideas, the Province of Quebec should establish forest reserves in order to protect our trees for future generations, and in order to protect the water supply of the county. I can hardly be expected to denounce this clause of Mr. Bourassa's programme, as it is the policy of the Government of which I have the honor to belong. The following forest reserves have been established to date in the Province of Quebec:

	Square miles.
National Park, with	3,271½
Gaspe Park, with	2,523½
Rimouski Reserve	1,249½
Chaudiere Reserve, with....	156
Temiscouata Reserve, with...	227
Bonaventure Reserve, with...	1,733
Saguenay and Labrador Reserve with	110,000
Barachois Reserve, with....	113
Ottawa Reserve, with.....	27,652
St. Maurice Reserve	21,121
Riviere Ouelle, with	341

Making a total of.....168,386½

or in acres, 107,766,253—an area three times the whole of England and Wales. Mr. Bourassa is just a few years behind the time in talking to us about Forest Reserves.

He advocates colonization reserves, and we had already established them before he told us we should do so.

Mr. Bourassa also tells us that we should have secondary schools between our elementary schools and classical colleges for the preparation of children for business life. Once more, I have to

agree with Mr. Bourassa, and also to point to him the fact, which apparently he is not aware of, that we have in the Province of Quebec 791 model schools and academies, with an attendance of 131,406 pupils.

I do not think the people will readily adopt the educational policy of Mr. Bourassa, particularly as he objects to the elected representatives of the people spending any increased educational grant that we may hope for.

Mr. Bourassa also advocates the sale of water powers by auction. That is the law of the province which has been in force for some time.

I am sorry that I cannot follow him on all his theories. In Quebec, some time ago, he advanced the magnificent proposition that it was the duty of the Local Government to plan out a network of railways and highways for the development of the province and simply send the scheme to Ottawa with a demand that the Federal Government do all the work and pay all the money. Such an idea, I am sure, would never occur to anyone but Mr. Bourassa. He seemed not to dream of the probability of the Federal Parliament laughing any such demand out of court.

IRRESPONSIBLE GOVERN- MENT WAS NOT BOURASSA'S GRANDFATHER'S IDEAL

He has now developed another notion that what is necessary to protect the Province of Quebec is to establish a permanent commission of distinguished legal gentlemen, who could not be removed from office—in the same manner as judges are protected. They had such a permanent and immovable body about a hundred years ago in this province, and Mr. Bourassa's grandfather made a great fuss about it, claiming that what the people wanted was representative and responsible government. We have now, thank God, representative and responsible government, and there are few, if any, in this province, who wish, with Mr. Bourassa, to return the long road backwards to one hundred years ago.

I would like to add a word in regard to the bitter and unfair denunciation of Mr. Bourassa in respect to some of my colleagues, but, as there are other speakers to follow me, I will only repeat the remarks made by Mr. Bourassa himself at Montmagny that the proper time and place to investi-

gate any such charges is not at first on a public platform, but primarily before the Legislature of the country. When any such charges are made they will be investigated, and I am confident that you can safely rely upon Mr. Walker, the respected member for Huntingdon, Mr. Bergevin, the eloquent representative of Beauharnois, and the other distinguished gentlemen whom you see around me, to see that full and entire justice is done.

THE HONOR OF OUR PUBLIC MEN.

I am sure you realize that the honor of a public man is as dear to him and to his family as is the honor of any private citizen, and should not lightly be taken away. I have known the Hon. Mr. Turgeon for many years and have followed his brilliant career with the greatest of pleasure. Nowhere in all that long record has the slightest stain or spot been found, and I ask you, is it not right that that good record should stand him now in stead, as

against attacks that are supported only by the word of a disappointed Belgian blackmailer, who was publicly proclaimed such by the Legislature of the province of Quebec at its last session? The campaign of slander, which Mr. Bourassa has demeaned himself to enter upon may have some temporary effect. It may, for a time, cause Mr. Turgeon distress and agony—it may prevent men of sensitive mould from ever desiring to enter the public arena, where they are liable to such misrepresentation and abuse; but I have the firm conviction that, in the long run, truth and right will triumph, and, when that day does come, I have no doubt whatever but the character of the splendid administration of the Hon. Mr. Gouin and of his first lieutenant—the Hon. Mr. Turgeon—will be vindicated, and their reputation remain undimmed by the whirlwind of slander and abuse that is now passing over this province.

